



November 4, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg  
U.S. Secretary Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave. SE  
Washington, DC 20509

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

I wanted to lend our Association's support for the **Connected, Rural, Equitable, and Autonomous Transportation for Everyone (CREATE)** grant application to the United States Department of Transportation's Advanced Transportation Technology and Innovation (ATTAIN) Program.

CREATE advances the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)'s vision and strategy – led by the Integrated Mobility Division (IMD) – to partner with transit agencies, key stakeholders leaders, private industry, and the research community to deliver affordable, convenient, safe, and expanded transit services to transportation disadvantaged communities in rural areas using advanced technology.

CREATE builds on North Carolina's existing on-demand and shared mobility efforts and seeks to evolve the state's Connected Autonomous Shuttle Supporting Innovation (CASSI) program by piloting and evaluating higher speed, Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS)-compliant autonomous vehicles (AVs) by testing and integrating the vehicles into rural transit fleets.

NCDOT IMD will partner with May Mobility, Via, Bridgestone, Toyota, the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical (NC A&T) State University to deliver autonomy-enabled and accessible micro transit services that connect transportation disadvantaged communities to essential services and job opportunities, such as:

- Bridgestone Americas' tire manufacturing facility – the single largest industrial employer in Wilson County, NC with over 1,800 employees – by building on the Wilson RIDE service
- Nash General Hospital (Nash UNC Health Care) – the third largest employer in Nash County, NC with over 1,600 employees – by complementing the existing fixed route service
- Multiple employers and key destinations in downtown Asheboro, NC including Randolph Health with more than 1,000 employees, Asheboro Senior Center, and the YMCA – by establishing a new fixed route circulator service as an additional option alongside the existing demand response service.

Micro transit is a technology-enabled, shared mobility service that typically uses shuttles or vans to provide pooled, on-demand transportation with dynamic routing. The Association believes this kind of public/private partnership could be a mobility model which could be replicated nationally.

Sincerely,

*David Rhew, Executive Director*

